

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting

March 18, 1999

2:00 p.m.

Room 433, Blatt Building

Members present: William Barnet, James Bennett, Rosie Marie Berry, Jim Bryan, William Gummerson, Susan Hoag, Alex Martin, Nikki Setzler, Joel Smith, Henry Spann, Bob Staton, Lynn Thompson, Larry Wilson

Members in legislative session: Ronald Townsend, Bobby Harrell

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Barnet welcomed the members of the Committee and the visitors to the meeting.

II. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting were approved as distributed.

III. Subcommittee Reports

- A. Academic Standards and Assessments: Mr. Wilson reported on the status of work before the Subcommittee. The staff is working with the three review panels for the science standards and a technical advisory committee for the development of school ratings. The prototype report cards have been distributed for comment (2500 packets with cards for four school levels). At this time, all information regarding the report card is considered conceptual and subject to change.
- B. EIA and Improvement Mechanisms: Because the subcommittee had not met, Mr. Staton had no report.
- C. Parent Involvement: Mr. Bennett reported on the March 17 Task Force meeting and reminded members of the June 17 meeting with Dr. Joyce Epstein.
- D. Public Awareness: Mr. Smith reported that the Request for Proposals had been published. Respondents have one month to submit proposals. After complimenting Senator Setzler's article expressing appreciation to teachers, Mr. Barnet asked the Public Awareness Subcommittee to continue the effort to acknowledge teacher contributions during this first year of accountability implementation.

- E. Staff and Administration: Mr. Barnet presented the Employee Personnel Manual. The Committee approved the manual as presented. He asked if there were questions regarding the Funding Public Education paper. Dr. Anderson briefed the Committee on the status of the Palmetto Business Forum project.

IV. Discussion Regarding the Timing of Requirements for Promotion/Retention and the Exit Exam

Speaking at the request of the Committee, Emory Smith (Assistant Deputy Attorney General) reviewed the issues regarding retention and exit exam requirements for diplomas. He referenced the "Debra P. v. Turlington" case. He suggested that the issues were adequate notice, confirmation that students had been taught the materials, and opportunity for remediation.

Dale Stuckey, Chief Counsel to the State Department of Education, discussed the Debra P. case and others. She also discussed a case in the Fourth Circuit regarding retention. Mrs. Stuckey indicated the current exit exam requirement (the new PACT) applied to the Class of 2002. She said the Committee might wish to discuss the timing of the requirement with testing and assessment leaders.

There was general discussion of the need for adequate professional development. Mr. Barnet asked that he, Mr. Wilson and Dr. Anderson meet with Superintendent Tenenbaum to discuss the opportunities for additional professional development on the standards for Summer 1999.

V. Invited remarks from a Key Constituency: Superintendents' Committee on Accountability

Dr. Pat Burns spoke for the Committee. Her remarks are taken from the Superintendent's document, "A Framework for Effectiveness", to be released in early April. Dr. Burns offered five recommendations for priority consideration:

- Design and implementation of a quality professional development program;
- Review and strengthen the support structure for schools (SDE capacity, structure of regional initiatives, clarification of roles);
- Promote quality teaching and learning by appropriate and flexible use of time;
- Statewide leadership for families and children, birth to age three;
- Provide statewide leadership to the development of alternative instructional settings.

The Committee is proposing 8 modifications to the Education Accountability Act:

- Offer alternatives to retention;
- Implement flexible summer school requirements;
- Fully fund all EAA requirements (e.g., summer school);

- Provides schools alternatives to the Act 135 requirements (e.g., substitute the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools planning requirement);
- Review and revise the "absolute" rating to eliminate the over reliance on one test;
- Review and revise roles of SBE, EOC, and SDE;
- Add a district superintendent to the EOC;
- Balance EOC membership geographically.

VI. Open Discussion

The Committee discussed a number issues related to fulfillment of its statutory duties. The Committee asked the Staff and Administration Subcommittee to plan a retreat to discuss: clarify of roles, responsibilities of the Committee, advocacy challenges, and how to be most effective with a variety of constituencies.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.